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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON STANDBY ARRANGEMENTS FOR PEACE-KEEPING

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of the Security Council's request that I report, at least once a year, on the progress made on standby arrangements with Member States concerning their possible contribution to United Nations peace-keeping operations (S/PRST/1994/22). It covers developments since the submission of my previous report on the subject on 30 June 1994 (S/1994/777).

II. CONCEPT

2. The purpose of a standby arrangement is to have a precise understanding of the forces and other capabilities a Member State will have available at a given state of readiness, should it agree to contribute to a peace-keeping operation. Such an understanding facilitates the Organization's efforts to identify troops and equipment for new and ongoing operations, as well as to plan and budget for their deployment. Similarly, it places the participating Government in a better position to plan and budget for a possible contribution to a peace-keeping operation, to train and prepare its personnel and, if necessary, to arrange for equipment. Standby arrangements apply to peace-keeping operations only; enforcement operations fall outside their scope.

3. Standby arrangements are based on the established principle that contributions to peace-keeping operations are voluntary. It follows that a standby arrangement does not constitute an automatic obligation on the part of the participating Member State to contribute. Hence, it cannot be assumed that all resources will indeed be made available when so requested. The key element in the system of standby arrangements is the exchange of detailed information to facilitate planning and preparation for both the participating Member States and the United Nations. Information provided to the Secretariat is stored in a database and kept confidential.

4. Under a standby arrangement, a Member State identifies certain resources for possible use in United Nations peace-keeping operations. Such resources may include military units, individual civilian and military personnel (e.g. police,

military observers), specialized services, equipment and other capabilities. The Member State provides the United Nations on an annual basis with information on those resources, their state of readiness and equipment, as well as an indication of the time needed to prepare them for deployment. These details should be confirmed in writing.

5. The resources are to remain in their home country until employment, the timing of which is usually decided upon in discussions between the Secretariat and the Member State in question. The usual period of deployment is six months for military units and one year for individuals. A military unit may, after the agreed period, be replaced by another unit and return to its standby status in the home country.

6. The responsibility for the training of standby personnel rests with Member States. To assist Governments in this area, the Secretariat has developed training manuals, covering general aspects of peace-keeping, and has set up United Nations training assistance teams, made up of experienced peace-keepers provided by Member States.

7. To facilitate the process of planning and preparation, the Secretariat has defined standard components or "building blocks" from which various types of operations may be constructed. These "building blocks" are broken down into small basic elements, thus facilitating broad participation by Member States at levels commensurate with their capabilities. Standard components include headquarters support units, infantry battalions, civilian police, communications units, air services, engineer support, health services, multi-role logistic units, transportation, maintenance, supply, movement control and food and catering services. While most units would usually be staffed by military personnel, this is not a requirement.

8. These standard components are listed in tables of organization and equipment that have been made available to Member States. The tables provide guidelines on tasks, organization, size and equipment, including the number of vehicles, of the types of units typically deployed in peace-keeping operations. The tables, issued first in 1994, also served as a basis for the revision of the system of reimbursement of contingent-owned equipment, which has been the subject of extensive consultations between the Secretariat and troop contributors. The results of these consultations will in due course be reflected in subsequent versions of the tables.

III. CURRENT STATUS

9. Since the start of the standby-arrangement initiative in 1993, members of the Secretariat's standby-arrangements team have visited 57 countries. In addition, the Secretariat is in touch with the Governments of 80 others. Discussions held thus far were considered useful and have contributed to a better mutual understanding of the process of contributing troops and equipment to United Nations peace-keeping operations.

10. Significant progress has been achieved over the last year. In my previous report, I reported that 21 Member States had confirmed their willingness to

provide standby resources totalling some 30,000 personnel that could, in principle, be called upon. As of 31 October 1995, 47 Member States have made such a confirmation, involving a total of 55,000 personnel: Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Belarus, Bulgaria, Canada, Chad, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Guatemala, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, Myanmar, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Senegal, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Of these 47 Member States, some 30 have provided information on specific capabilities. Two Member States, Jordan and Denmark, have formalized their standby arrangements through a memorandum of understanding.

11. The resources involved are shown in the annex to the present document. The 55,000 include elements of different sizes, varying from infantry battalions to individual military observers, and cover the whole range of components listed in the tables of organization and equipment. The bulk of resources consists of infantry; there is a need for additional resources to complement that number of infantry with the necessary logistic support, especially in the areas of communications, multi-role logistics, transport, health services, engineering, mine-clearing and transport utility aircraft. Moreover, most of the resources with a full complement of equipment and logistic support are from the group of Western European and Other States. The Secretariat will, therefore, continue its discussions to seek the broadest possible participation by Member States as well as to arrive at a proper mix of troops and supporting units.

IV. INFORMATION AND PLANNING

12. The Secretariat is currently aiming to improve and expand its database with detailed information to be provided by participating Governments. Such information would enable the Secretariat to determine, in advance, detailed requirements of peace-keeping forces and of individual units, in planning sea/airlift provisions, and addressing any deficiencies in the composition and equipment of peace-keeping units. Obviously, this would further speed up the process of planning and deployment. For example, the information provided by Governments proved helpful in the planning for the United Nations Angola Verification Mission III (UNAVEM III) and the United Nations Mission in Haiti.

13. The detailed information required for these purposes includes the response time for each individual unit, any political or material preconditions, period of self-sufficiency, level of equipment, probable port of departure, total surface/volume/weight, number of vehicles, number of containers, information on particularly large or heavy items, information on dangerous cargo (e.g. ammunition) and any specific handling instructions. To date, 15 Governments have provided the Secretariat with these data.

14. Such information may also help in addressing the problem of units that lack the proper equipment. In principle, units should be fully equipped based on the guidelines provided in the tables of organization and equipment. This may, however, not be achievable for all contributing countries. It is, therefore,

important to provide information on the level and status of equipment at the time a standby arrangement is agreed upon. This would enable the Secretariat to identify any gaps and to seek solutions to fill them in advance. In this connection, I should like to repeat the suggestion made earlier (S/26450, para. 17, and S/1995/1, para. 45) that partnerships be established between Governments that need equipment and those ready to provide it. Standby arrangements provide a vehicle for such partnerships. In this regard, I should also mention that the Secretariat is in touch with African Governments and the Organization of African Unity in line with ongoing efforts by Member States to improve the preparedness for conflict-prevention and peace-keeping on that continent.

15. Detailed information is equally useful in the area of logistic support. In principle, troops should arrive in the mission area with sufficient provisions to sustain themselves for a period of 60 days, during which period the United Nations would set up the necessary logistic support capacity. In reality, however, this takes much longer, sometimes as long as four months. This gap could usefully be bridged by military-based logistic support. In the case of UNAVEM III, for example, a logistic support unit contributed by the United Kingdom provided useful third-line support for a period of three months at the start of that Mission, enabling it in that period to find civilian contractors to replace it. Detailed information on the capabilities of such units would be helpful in preparing for the early stages of an operation.

V. RESPONSE TIME

16. In several instances, I have drawn attention to the problem of the often long period between a Security Council decision to establish an operation and the arrival of troops and equipment in the mission area. In this regard the Security Council expressed the belief (S/PRST/1995/9) that the first priority in improving the capacity for rapid deployment should be the further enhancement of the existing standby arrangements. A key element in this regard is response time, defined as the period between the time the request to provide resources is made and the time these resources are ready for air/sealift to the mission area. Response time includes the time required by Governments for domestic political approval, administrative procedures and military preparation.

17. Initially, Governments were given preferred response times: 7 days for individuals, 14 days for elements involved in the reception phase and 30 days for other units. However, the responses from Governments to date indicate that few are able to adhere to these preferences. For example, it was found that there were considerable differences in the response time for various categories of personnel, e.g. standing professional armies, call-up mechanisms (reservists) and/or conscript forces, the last of which require a longer period of preparation.

18. The Secretariat has thus begun to register response times according to the declared individual capacities of Member States. The response times given for confirmed standby resources vary from 7 days to over 90 days, with many Governments needing over 60 days to prepare for deployment. This information would, in principle, enable the Secretariat to call on all potential troop

contributors, since units with longer response times may be planned for employment in the later stages of a peace-keeping operation.

19. Another important factor in rapid deployment is the time needed to deploy resources in the field once they are ready. This depends on the timely availability of aircraft or ships as well as on political factors. Deployment time could be shortened dramatically if sea/airlift resources were to be made available by Member States having that capacity.

VI. FINAL REMARKS

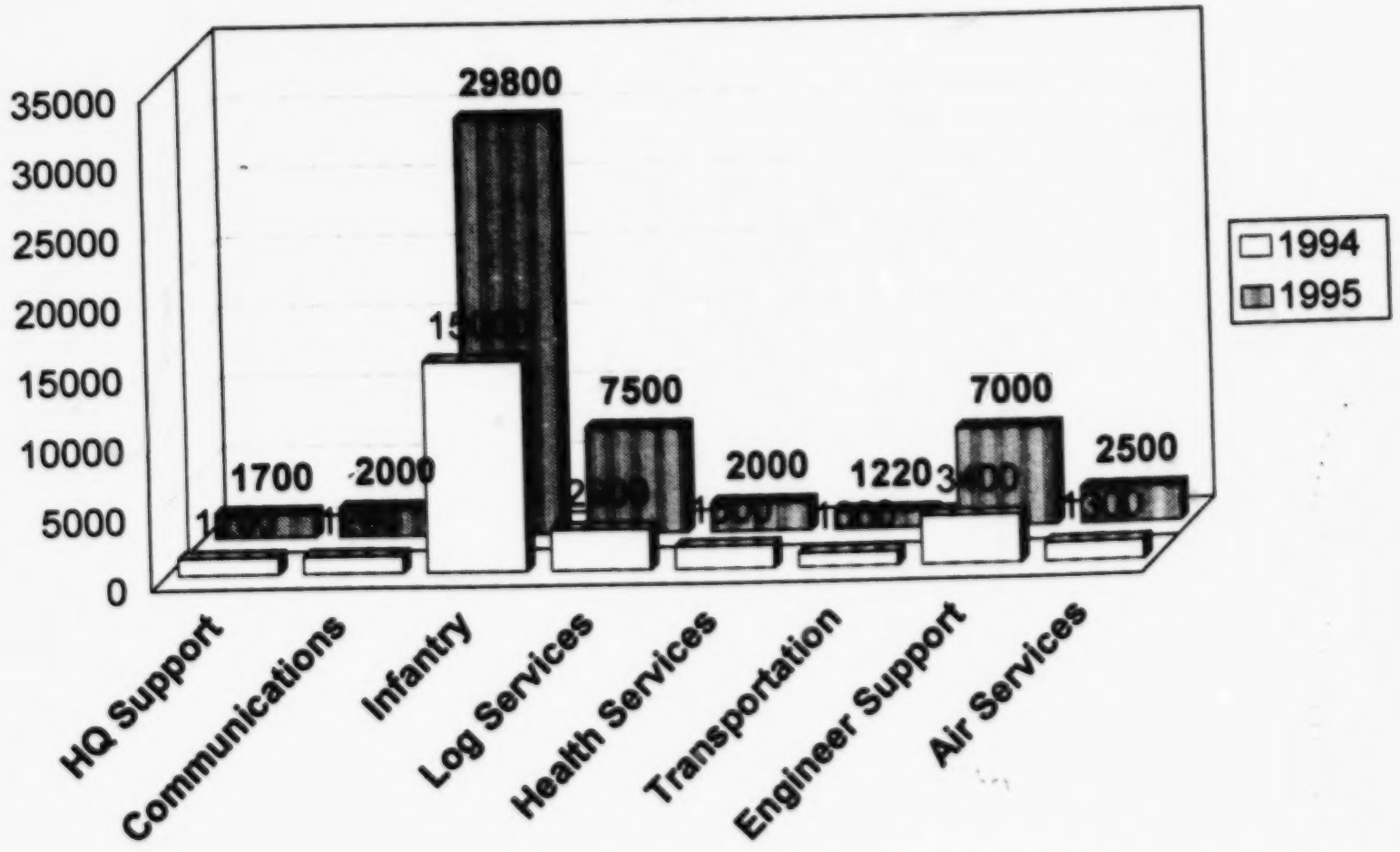
20. The system of standby arrangements has proven most useful in its ability to expedite planning. The information provided has facilitated the process of identifying possible troop contributors and planning for deployment of troops and equipment. Another improvement has been the development of standards, contained in the tables of organization and equipment, which have helped to achieve a measure of standardization.

21. While there is certainly no lack of willingness to make troops and equipment available for peace-keeping operations, the United Nations is currently far from having a rapid reaction capability. In this regard, I welcome recent initiatives taken by Member States to address this issue, either individually or in partnership with other Member States. The Secretariat, for its part, will continue its dialogue with Governments with a view to broadening the geographical base of available resources and obtaining the information necessary to facilitate and accelerate the organization, planning and deployment of peace-keeping operations.

Annex

UN STANDBY ARRANGEMENTS

A. Military Forces



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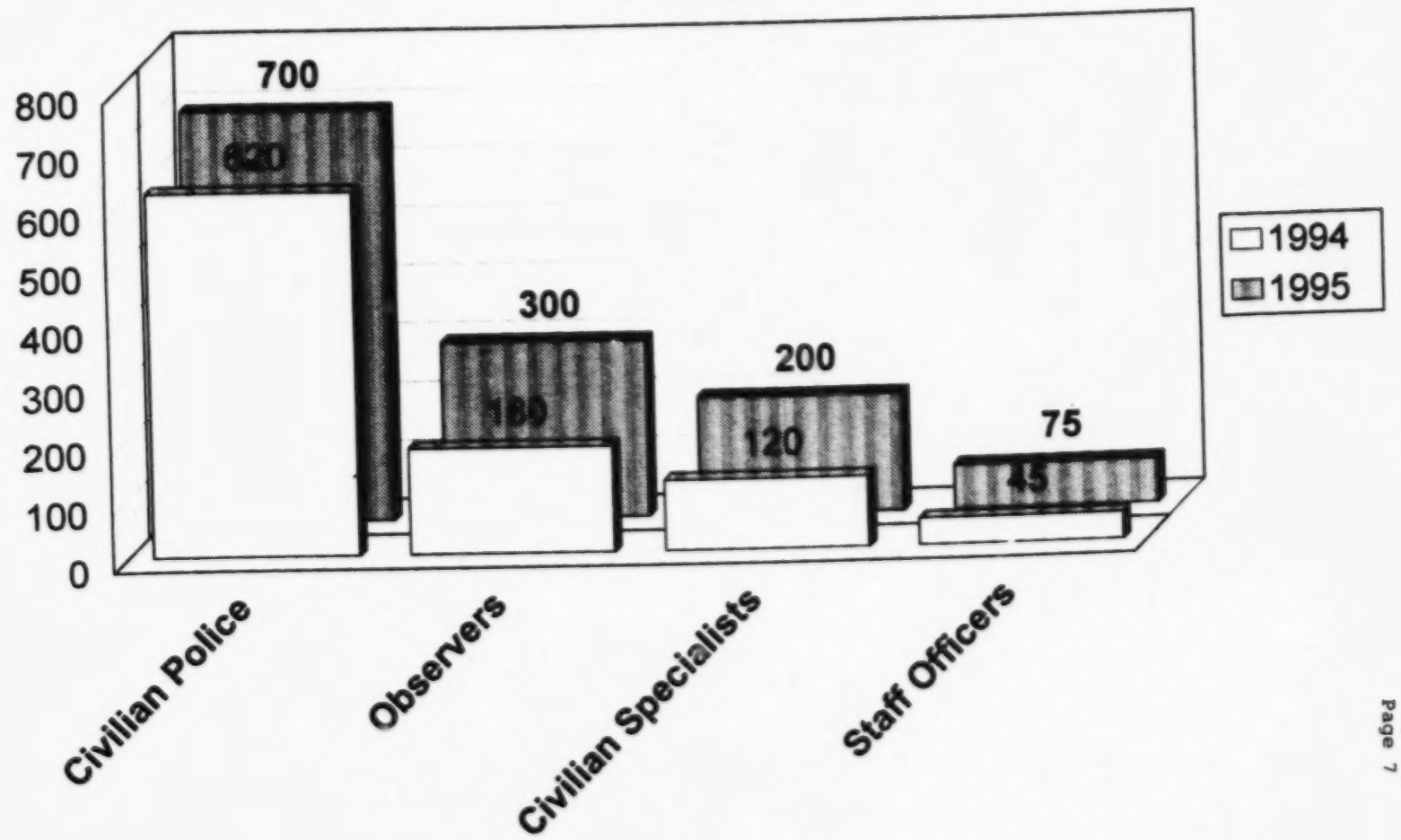
B. Others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1994
1995
Civilian Police
Observers
Civilian Specialists
Staff Officers